PRESIDENTIAL

Design Awards

1984

Winners of the First
Presidential Awards
for Design Excellence
January 30, 1985

Introduction

The Presidential Design Awards Program is the first government-wide effort to recognize and foster excellence in Federal design efforts. President Reagan stated on establishing the awards that:
". . . what we build, print, or cause to be manufactured for Federal use directly affects every citizen. We must ensure that these vast investments are cost-effective, well-planned, and reflect the standards of excellence which we all expect from our government."

The thirteen winners of the first Presidential Awards for Design Excellence exemplify the standards of excellence that should be expected from the Federal government. The best design results from careful planning, technical creativity, and sensitivity to human requirements and sensibilities. It is an instrument to better inform, organize, assist, and serve. It should reflect our diverse cultural values and the highest standards.

I believe that these winners clearly illustrate what is possible when dedicated designers work with able administrators to produce functional, cost-effective products and public services. Excellence in Federal design requires not only designers of skill and creativity, but administrators and lawmakers who provide mandates and policies to stimulate good design.

The Presidential Design Awards Program was managed by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of its efforts to nurture and recognize design excellence in America. Through its Federal Design Improvement Project, the Endowment's commitment to Federal design excellence is long-standing and includes initiation of such projects as the Federal Design Assemblies, the Federal Architecture Project, the Federal Graphics Improvement Program, and the Excellence Attracts Excellence program with the Office of Personnel Management.

The Presidential Design Awards have special symbolic value. They call attention to design quality at the highest level of government. Through the President, they bring to all of us a sense of what can be.

Frank Hodsoll

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Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts

Report of the Presidential Design Awards Jury

The Presidential Design Awards Program was established in December 1983 to recognize exemplary achievements in Federal design in the fields of architecture, engineering design, graphic design, interior design, landscape architecture, product/industrial design, and urban design and planning. This is the first government-wide design awards program and its Presidential sponsorship places the issue of design excellence at the highest level of government.

Quality in design has been a national cause since the founding of our Republic. In the planning and design of Washington, both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson recognized that the success of the nation was linked to the vision that people had of themselves and the buildings that housed their institutions.

In the twentieth century, this condition continues with the Federal Design

Improvement Project administered by the National Endowment for the Arts — an effort strongly supported by four Presidents for over a decade. In 1982, Federal projects in the fields of design and construction amounted to approximately forty billion dollars. Most of these expenditures exert an important influence on design practices in the private sector, either from the scope and volume of everyday products necessary to the operation of government or from specially designed products which have been adapted for civilian or commercial use. Therefore, a Federal mandate for design quality affects the entire environment and contributes to improving the quality of life of the people of this country.

It should be recognized that the benefits of design excellence also have economic implications. The vast majority of advanced industrial nations have national design programs and their business and government leaders have recognized that good design is good business. As part of our effort to improve the nation's competitiveness in world trade, the Federal government's leadership in improving American design standards is both timely and important.

In this context, the jury applauds the Federal government's initiative in establishing the Presidential Design Awards Program. From among 630 submissions, 91 have been selected to receive Federal Design Achievement Awards, 13 of which have been chosen to receive the Presidential Award for Design Excellence.

Projects receiving the Presidential Award range from a simple prosthetic device commissioned by the Veterans Administration to free amputees from the physical and visual implications of their disability to the Department of the Interior's program of tax incentives for historic preservation — a program engendering thousands of private-sector projects that have raised public appreciation of America's architectural heritage.

By far the largest number of entries were submitted under the category of graphic design, ranging from a single postage stamp to a total graphic communications program. Especially noteworthy is the visual communications system developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration whose posters, publications, and logotype generally maintain a high standard of design which truly captures the spirit and vitality of the space program.

The jury further wishes to call attention to the importance of the Urban Environmental Design program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development which has provided local governments and the professional design community with opportunities to make our cities more liveable.

On the other end of the spectrum of design, the jury found much to applaud in the Art-in-Architecture program of the General Services Administration which aims to achieve an integration of building and works of art. The jury recommends, however, that greater involvement of artists in early stages of the design process would significantly alter the relationship between buildings, site, landscaping and works of art.

In conclusion, the jury would like to commend the Federal government for its support of quality design and suggests that it expand on its already proven record. In order to do this, programs that stimulate design through incentives, as well as those that create jobs and educational possibilities, should be expanded. This could include criteria for the selection of design professionals from both the public and private sectors, peer evaluation of projects in progress, and recognition of work that exhibits high standards of excellence. Finally, the jury believes that Presidential endorsement of good design, as evidenced by completed projects, would help create a better climate within the Federal government to strive for design excellence resulting in a higher quality of life for all.

I. M. Pei
Jury Chairman

Jury Citations

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THE INTERCITY BRIDGE
Pasco/Kennewick, Washington

"The designers of The Intercity Bridge in the cities of Pasco and Kennewick, Washington, and the many authorities supporting their efforts are given a Presidential Award for Design Excellence for their innovative, aesthetic, economical, durable and well-received solution for the half-mile loop crossing of the Columbia River.

"The engineers adapted a technique never used in the United States before to local site and weather conditions: they also used an appropriate material — pre-stressed concrete — ideally suited to those conditions. The engineers were required to establish new design guidelines modeled on foreign codes but acceptable to the authorities responsible for the project. In all these endeavors they succeeded admirably.

"The Intercity Bridge is not just a great technical accomplishment: it is a work of art. The use of steel and pre-stressed concrete in striking white color, the simplicity of the connections of its components, the elegance of the bridge lines, and the clarity of its structural behavior enhance the beauty of this utilitarian structure in ways that can be perceived by both experts and laymen. The example of The Intercity Bridge should be followed by both technicians and Federal authorities in the solution of difficult problems."

B

HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES PROGRAM

"In passing the Federal tax legislation of 1976, the Congress made its purpose clear; 'The historic and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of order to the American people.' As a direct result of this tax incentive program, and through the development, application and review process of the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" and the accompanying guidelines, more than 9,000 historic buildings nationwide have been rehabilitated and re-used in a variety of innovative ways and with a high standard of design.

"The jury commends this effort as a broad cultural accomplishment. The Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program encourages the practical and appropriate reuse of historic buildings. It has fostered a revival of skilled craftsmanship; introduced unusual job opportunities in a changing economy: and brought about a philosophical change by demonstrating that the old buildings of America can be as serviceable, economical and important as the new."

(Pictured: Sears World Trade, Inc.; Washington, D.C.

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THE SEATTLE FOOT™

"The result of a rare collaboration between doctors, engineers, and designers, the Seattle Foot is a prosthetic device of great mechanical simplicity, high efficiency, and modest cost that opens up such dynamic exercises as running and ball playing to foot amputees. The device has already proven its ability not only to improve the lifestyle of the amputees but also through good design to free them of the common visual implications of their disability.

"This award is given to the designers of the device and to the Veterans Administration, which supported their effort, in recognition of their ingenuity, sense of service and successful consideration of all the facets — human, technical, and economic — of the difficult problem they solved. The dedication of the Seattle Foot research group is particularly worthy of praise and should be an example to other groups at a time when most engineers are dedicated to the improvement of the implements of war."

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LINN COVE VIADUCT
Blue Ridge Parkway, North Carolina

"The designers of the Linn Cove Viaduct were confronted with the difficult problem of creating a road over a rugged terrain of exceptional beauty without interfering with the environment. Their solution is technically innovative and respectful of the environmental situation.

"From an engineering point of view, construction of the roadway by pre-cast, segmental concrete elements set from above on segmental piers is elegant, economical and new. These techniques can be used in the service of the environment: they provide accessibility by animal life both below and around the structure and do not damage the forest land, trees, or streams.

"The roadway results in an elegant curving ribbon that caresses the terrain without using it as a support. It gives the motorist the sensation of driving tantalizingly on air while the earth goes by.

"For their sensitivity and high technical expertise, the designers and the authorities who supported them well deserve this recognition."

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NASA VISUAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AND GRAPHIC WORKS

"The strong visual identity achieved by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shows the effectiveness of an appropriate Design Standards Manual and its implementation. The logotype communicates high technology: it reads well on different surfaces and treatments and is easily recognizable in motion. Through its consistent and appropriate application, it has been instrumental in establishing a clear identity for the agency.

"The evolution of the Visual Communication System through the various programs of publications and posters generally maintains a high standard of imaginative design: at the same time, the level of communication is accessible and educational. The Visual Communication System truly captures the spirit and vitality of the space program."

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FRANKLIN COURT
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"Franklin Court in Philadelphia is an inventive sculptural statement that evokes a historic setting. The architects reconstructed five houses on Market Street to form one edge of the site. On the original location of Benjamin Franklin's house and printing shop, they erected a full-size sheltered framework that creatively engages the observer's imagination. Presenting the house and workshop as "ghosts" has also allowed archaeological remains of the building to be preserved for viewing *in situ*.

"By placing exhibit spaces below ground, the architects have made the maximum amount of the limited space available for public use. The Market Street houses and the large contemporary exhibit spaces underground display artifacts relating to Franklin and to his period in Philadelphia. Franklin Court achieves a blend of restoration, imaginative recreation and contemporary design while honoring the requirements of each."

G

UNIGRID DESIGN PROGRAM

"The Unigrid Design Program brings uniformity and quality to the communications of the National Park Service. This agency, one of the most advanced in its use of design, has a communication program which is admirable in many respects. The Unigrid Design Program, however, is the cornerstone of the overall program.

"The program fulfills the primary objective of a design system; reducing routine decisions so that

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tracted, thus enhancing its location near the city's Museum of Science. In this sense, its esthetic is drawn from functions within.

"The Charles River Project is a major public works program of the highest order, moving beyond a narrow technical mandate to complement the larger social, physical and visual qualities of its city."

M

SCATTERED INFILL PUBLIC HOUSING
Charleston, South Carolina

"The Scattered Infill Public Housing Project is a highly commendable example of a sensitive approach to public housing. An effective planning process created a partnership of the local community, involved the City of Charleston, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and the Charleston Department of Housing and Urban Development. These groups chose a developmental strategy that both increased the supply of housing and provided a stimulus to neighborhood revitalization. Existing open sites were carefully selected for their potential for neighborhood renewal and for their ability to provide the necessary social continuity.

"The choice of a vernacular house type, the Charleston 'side-house,' proved to be appropriate contexturally and climatically. The use of local construction methods, materials, detailing and colors helped aesthetically to integrate the structures into their surroundings. The new dwellings are so skillfully and sensitively designed and sited that they do not resemble public housing. User satisfaction is high: tenants have been integrated into an existing community, thus avoiding the stigma often associated with large-scale public-housing projects.

"The infill approach to public housing is clearly a time-consuming process requiring the utmost commitment from a housing authority. In Charleston attractive livable environments have been created within stringent budgetary and time constraints. These examples are exemplary in their social, architectural and urbanistic goals and set an important precedent for future public housing projects."

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effort can be concentrated on quality. The implementation of the program demonstrates sensitivity to the wide variety of subject matter and attention to the finest detail. It is an example to others and has already achieved international recognition."

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U.S. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION SYMBOL SIGNS

"The U.S. Department of Transportation has developed a coherent system of transportation-related symbol signs for use throughout the United States. Taking full advantage of work done internationally, the American Institute of Graphic Arts, in cooperation with the D.O.T., compiled an inventory of sign systems. A committee of eminent designers reviewed the major systems and recommended the development of 52 symbols. Taking the best elements from other systems but refining each symbol, the designers created a balanced new system. Now in use in thousands of transport-related facilities throughout the country, these symbol signs make a valuable contribution to communication.

"This project was undertaken as a means of achieving standardization in this field. The jury encourages D.O.T. to continue evaluating the effectiveness of the system and to promote the use of these symbols as universally as possible."

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ART-IN-ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM

"Through its recognition of the necessity and value of works of art in the public environment and its commitment to their placement in public Federal facilities, the Art-in-Architecture Program of the General Services Administration has demonstrated leadership as a client and produced salutory results at over 250 sites in the U.S. and its possessions at a cost of only one-half of one percent of the general contracts.

"The program is also to be commended for its intelligent willingness to sustain potential risks in the selection of artists through the solicitation of nominations from peer groups appointed by the National Endowment for the Arts.

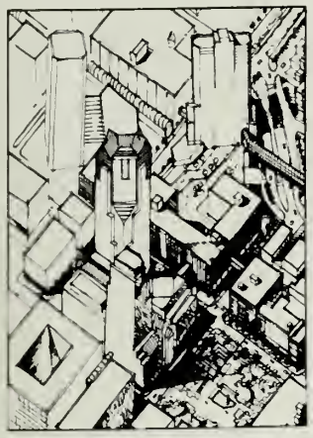
"Installations that may have been judged by the press, critics and others to be difficult to comprehend (or less than completely successful) are to be expected in such a courageous program and should be interpreted as an index of its continuing vitality."
(Pictured: Batcolumn, Chicago, IL)

J

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR RESTORING AMERICAN CITIES
St. Paul, Minnesota

"This ongoing project shows how urban design should be done and what it can do for American cities. Lowertown in 1978 was a semi-abandoned and deteriorating wholesaling area next to downtown St. Paul, Minnesota. Now, nearly six years later, it is becoming a lively new community supporting a rich mixture of activities which reinforce one another and complement the downtown. In the process, the old urban fabric is being conserved and repaired.

"The jury commends the non-profit Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation (LRC), created by the City of St. Paul with funding from the



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McKnight Foundation, for its urban design leadership. The design, financing and marketing strategy developed by LRC used small amounts of public funding from such Federal agencies as the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Dept. of the Interior to leverage $200 million in private investment and create 3,800 jobs. Skillful planning of design guidelines, followed by dedicated design review, have resulted in preservation, adaptive re-use and new construction of quality.

"This effort has been guided by a creative and powerful city-building vision. Unlike old-style urban renewal, which depended on massive Federal funding and large-scale intervention following a fixed plan, Lowertown Redevelopment uses a subtle approach based on a series of public and private partnerships which allow for continuous adjustment of the vision. We recommend that other cities follow St. Paul's lead."

K

THE GARDENS
San Mateo, California

"In a world of increasing population and of diminishing land available for traditional single-family homes, alternative solutions are needed to provide housing for our country. Dependency on the automobile further restricts ground available for construction, and our general affluence exacerbates the problem by demanding larger living areas and additional vehicles.

"The Gardens project in San Mateo, California, is a refreshing solution to a difficult site problem. Given the insular quality of the site and a lack of stimulating surrounding environs, the designers elected to turn inward and create a high density development based on pedestrian circulation spaces and private gardens. The cars are sequestered, and buildings accommodate the large trees that are already on the site. The individual units are small but contain two stories: rooms are designed with views of the exterior gardens, which create an illusion of more spaciousness. Besides creating a wonderful overall ambiance, The Gardens themselves are more important because they give people opportunities to create their own personal statements, their own special places. Gardens historically have been metaphors of paradise: today they serve to express people's dreams in something like the way homesteading did in the previous century."

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CHARLES RIVER PROJECT
Boston, Massachusetts

"One of historic Boston's finest achievements has been the creation and protection of its elaborate system of inter-connected public parks and pathways. A feature of this system is the "necklace" designed by Frederick Law Olmstead during the last century, which weaves a path of green through the city's fabric to terminate in the Charles River Basin, site of this awarded design. The Charles River Project contributes admirably to this tradition, while at once resolving the critical technical aspects of its program — tidal and river flood and pollution control.

"As a watershed plan, it generates upstream recreational and wildlife areas, and extends the qualities of the river basin a bit further north, towards the harbor. As a physical structure, it reinforces the pedestrian inclination of the city by offering a foot path connecting two historical neighborhoods, Charlestown and the North End. As an engineering statement, it opens itself to view for the joy and entertainment of those attracted, thus enhancing its location near the city's Museum of Science. In this sense, its esthetic is drawn from functions within.

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"The infill approach to public housing is clearly a time-consuming process requiring the utmost commitment from a housing authority. In Charleston attractive livable environments have been created within stringent budgetary and time constraints. These examples are exemplary in their social, architectural and urbanistic goals and set an important precedent for future public housing projects."

Credits for Winning Entries

A. THE INTERCITY BRIDGE
- U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
- Arvid Grant and Associates, Inc., Consulting Engineers, Olympia, WA

B. HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES PROGRAM
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

C. THE SEATTLE FOOT™
- Veterans Administration, Rehabilitation, Research and Development Service
- Prosthetic Research Study, Dr. Ernest M. Burgess, Director, Seattle, WA
- Model & Instrument Works, Inc., Donald L. Poggi, Engineer, Seattle, WA

D. LINN COVE VIADUCT
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
- U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
- Figg & Muller, Engineers, Inc., Tallahassee, FL
- Jasper Construction Company, Atlanta, GA

E. N.A.S.A. VISUAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AND GRAPHIC WORKS
- National Aeronautics & Space Admin.
- Danne & Blackburn, Inc., Designers, NY
- White and Associates, Designers, Los Angeles, CA

F. FRANKLIN COURT
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
- Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown, Architects, Philadelphia, PA

G. UNIGRID DESIGN PROGRAM
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
- Vignelli Associates, Designers, NY

H. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SYMBOL SIGNS
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- American Institute of Graphic Arts, NY
- A.I.G.A. Signs & Symbols Committee, Thomas Geismar, Chairman
- Cook & Shanosky Assoc., Designers, Princeton, NJ

I. ART-IN-ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM
- U.S. General Services Administration, Art-in-Architecture Program

J. NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR RESTORING AMERICAN CITIES
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation, Weiming Lu, Executive Director
- City of St. Paul, George Latimer, Mayor; Douglas Foster, Urban Designer
- Port Authority of St. Paul, MN
- The McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis, MN
- Bentz, Thompson, Rietow, Inc., Architects, Minneapolis, MN
- Rafferty, Rafferty, Mikutowski, Roney & Associates, Architects, St. Paul, MN
- Miller, Hanson, Westerbeck, Bell Architects, Inc., Minneapolis, MN

K. THE GARDENS
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Backen Arrigoni & Ross, Inc., Architects, San Francisco, CA
- POD, Inc., Landscape Architects, Orange, CA
- J.S. Papp Associates, Inc., Structural Engineers, Redwood, CA

L. CHARLES RIVER PROJECT
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division
- CE Maguire, Inc., Engineers, Waltham, MA

M. SCATTERED INFILL PUBLIC HOUSING
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- City of Charleston, Joseph P. Riley, Mayor; Donald Cameron, Executive Director, Housing Authority
- Bradfield Associates, Architects, Atlanta, GA
- Middleton, McMillan, Architects, Inc., Charleston, SC